DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 444 055 CG 030 150

AUTHOR Savickas, Mark L.
TITLE Career Development and Public Policy: The Role of Values, Theory and Research.
PUB DATE 2000-03-00
NOTE 19p.; In: Making Waves: Career Development and Public Policy. International Symposium 1999 Papers, Proceedings, and Strategies (Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, May 2-4, 1999); see CG 030 145.
PUB TYPE Opinion Papers (120) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Vocational Education; *Career Counseling; *Career Development; *Public Policy; Theory Practice Relationship; *Values

ABSTRACT

Career development specialists have not usually participated in public policy about work and workers. This paper examines how, as a community of technical experts, they can encourage policymakers to use values, theory, and research findings to assess the impact of current practices and to generate new policies. Career development specialists can actively use policy to institutionalize values and preferred outcomes, starting by advancing counseling's values in the very problem definitions that structure legislative action. In addition to values, career development specialists can offer policymakers career theory as a viable means of coordinating and systematizing workforce policy. The science of vocational psychology provides a dependable source of knowledge to inform public policy aimed at developing a satisfactory workforce and satisfied workers. Vocational psychology has also produced effective career guidance techniques for assessing persons, providing occupational information, and matching people to fitting positions. Career professionals can offer their values, theory, and empirical knowledge as a descriptive base from which to devise principles and construct social policy regarding workforce development and career guidance. It is time for career development specialists to become more proactive in revitalizing values, theory, and research, and to become policy actors who help to development and guide our national workforces. (Contains 41 references.) (JDM)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 444 055

Career Development and Public Policy: The Role of Values, Theory and Research

By

Mark L. Savickas

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

2B

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CG 30150

6. CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC POLICY: THE ROLE OF VALUES, THEORY AND RESEARCH

Mark L. Savickas, Behavioral Sciences Department
Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine

At the end of the 20th century, career development specialists have embarked on a new project. They are seeking ways to strengthen national strategies for work force development and career guidance as well as to forge an international vision for career service delivery. These efforts have been prompted by the shift from an industrial to an information society and the concomitant tendency for the world to act as one economic market, rather than as a series of national markets. The global economy has brought a quest for greater accountability and efficiency, often through the increased use of technology. This quest has resulted in both larger and smaller businesses. To flourish in today's economy, companies must concentrate either on global or local markets, not national markets (Cascio, 1995). On the one hand, we have seen mammoth mergers such as the $74 billion agreement between Exxon and Mobile Oil. On the other, we have seen downsizing produce smaller companies that employ fewer people who work in teams with each member performing many tasks.

As mass production diminishes, and vertical teams replace hierarchies of specialists, work itself has been fundamentally restructured. Rather than being defined as a group of tasks involved in making a product, jobs are now described in terms of the services needed to meet customer demands. As work moves from making a product to performing a service, pay becomes linked to the market value of skills and success in customer service, rather than tenure or job title. The new emphasis on process, technology and service has increased the demand for technicians while reducing the demand for machinists. In addition to globalization and the transition to a service economy, social changes (particularly the privatization of public organizations, the aging work force and the greater participation of women, racial and ethnic minorities, and disabled workers) have also affected jobs.

The reorganization of the workplace has transformed the employment contract and the meaning of career. Job security dissipates as fewer companies promise lifetime employment along a well-defined career path, choosing instead to hire "contingent workers" for term-specific contracts. In the emerging employment compact, employees are urged to view themselves as "self-employed," with the employer being their customer. Because many workers can now anticipate holding at least 10 different jobs during their work life, they must focus on learning and developing skills

that enhance their current performance and qualify them for their next job. Thus, lifetime *employment* must become lifetime *employability*. To maintain their employability, contemporary workers must manage their own careers, with résumés becoming a list of transferable skills and adaptive strengths.

Employability is as important to organizations as it is to individuals. High technology, with its sophisticated production processes, makes a skilled work force even more important for economic success (Pffefer, 1994). Nations that now compete in the global economy know they need competent, well-trained work forces, and urge their public officials to help train a smarter, not harder, working population. Cascio (1995) concluded that, instead of narrow specialists and broad generalists, companies need "multi-specialists," that is, workers with in-depth knowledge about several different aspects of the business. As an example of cross-trained multi-specialists who can get things done, Cascio describes a Canadian company, Cadet Uniform Services. In the past, Cadet hired truck drivers to deliver clean uniforms and pick up dirty ones. Now, Cadet hires mini-entrepreneurs who function as customer service representatives as they design their own routes, manage accounts and receive pay cheques tied to customer satisfaction. As a second example, bank tellers in the United States used to handle deposits, withdrawals and payments. Now, they too are customer service representatives, authorized to approve loans, sell stocks and bonds, and offer financial advice. To prepare a skilled work force, nations must invest in public education, improve secondary schooling, expand opportunities for on-the-job training, increase computer literacy and enhance worker motivation.

In some ways, national work force policies and career theories have returned to the concerns they shared at the beginning of this century. At that time, they concentrated on preparing and selecting a satisfactory work force from among the thousands of immigrants and rural families swarming into burgeoning cities in search of manufacturing jobs. In that social context, Parsons (1909) devised an approach to career guidance that matched workers to fitting jobs. This matching paradigm, used both in vocational guidance and personnel selection, served the needs of an industrial society seeking satisfactory workers. After World War II, increasing attention was paid to worker job satisfaction, not just satisfactoriness. Reflecting this concern with individual work satisfaction, Super (1957) expanded career theory to focus on workers as well as work. Super's developmental perspective on workers concentrates on career satisfaction in contrast to occupational success. Thus, the pendulum at the beginning of the century pointed at satisfactoriness, then at mid-century swung to satisfaction, and now at the end of the century has swung back to satisfactoriness (Dawis, 1996). This swing in emphasis appears in public funding of work force preparation programs. The funding to support the school-to-work transition during the Great Depression and World War II concentrated on preparing

satisfactory workers. In the 1960s, the new emphasis on career education concentrated on workers' job satisfaction. Late in this century, public policy has returned to its focus on smoothing the school-to-work transition by preparing satisfactory workers.

Career Development Specialist's Responses to Work Life Changes

Changes in work and the workplace require a concomitant revision of career theory and practice. Unlike psychologists who focus on individuals, career development specialists focus on the nexus between person and environment, that is, the psycho-social integration of individuals into society. As such, career services benefit society as well as individuals. Choosing work that implements a self-concept and bestows a social identity enables an individual to perform productively for the community and thereby become self-supporting, successful, satisfied, stable and healthy. Despite the changes in work and the workplace, contemporary work remains one of the most important ways for individuals and communities to connect, co-operate and contribute to each other. In short, occupation gives stable meaning, passion and purpose to a life. Jobs help individuals become the types of people they want to be and gain an identity in their communities. Unfortunately, the transitional society and unstable environment in which we live make it difficult to create stable meaning through occupational identities. In the future, personal stability will have to come from the meaning and values workers construct subjectively for themselves, not receive objectively from their occupational titles.

Because of changes in the structure of work and its social organization, counsellors need to revise the 20th century paradigms of first matching people to positions and then helping them develop their careers in stable organizations. A paradigm must be designed that assists individuals to manage their own work lives strategically and draw meaning from the role of work in their lives, not from an organizational culture. Careers must become more personal and self-directed to flourish in the post-modern information age. As agents in their own lives, workers must learn to view a career as a carrier of personal meaning that defines and structures significant events in one's life (Carlsen, 1988: 186). Rather than looking just at how people fit into the occupational structure, career counsellors must envision how work fits into people's lives (Richardson, 1993) and how people can impose personal direction on their vocational behaviour (Miller-Tiedeman and Tiedeman, 1985). According to Young and Valach (1996: 364) a career will become a process that "people intentionally engage in to acquire social meaning within the framework of their lives."

The new paradigm for 21st century career guidance expands on, not replaces, the tried-and-true paradigms for occupational matching and career development. The new paradigm focusses on constructing meaning for a

life and accounts for changes in the social organization of work (Savickas, in press). Important developments include the shift from assuming that occupation is the most salient social role for every individual, to recognizing how individuals position their occupation in a constellation of important life roles. New constructs, such as career salience, work importance and work–family integration, signal this shift in meaning. The concentration on personal meaning and structuring life roles has accentuated the importance of values in designing a life. Rather than focussing on work values, career counsellors now discuss with clients which values they can fulfill in different life roles. For example, achievement can be gained at work, altruism satisfied by volunteering in community organizations, nurturance fulfilled in the family and creativity expressed in hobbies.

Reflecting the dissipating career paths in organizations, we find career *planning* being replaced by career *management*. Career planning functions better in a more stable and predictable economy. In this new era, flexible and adaptive self-management may provide a better approach for developing a life. In our transitional society and unstable environment, even foundational constructs of career theory, such as occupational interests, are being challenged. Occupational interests rely on "constant" rather than "variable" occupations. As occupations become less stable, it may be more beneficial to focus on activity interests (e.g., writing) rather than occupational interests (e.g., reporter). Attending to activities rather than occupations has brought renewed interest in skills and skill confidence. Some psychologists speculate that skills and skill confidence may eventually replace abilities and interests as criteria for matching people to positions. Finally, this trend is demonstrated by career education programs in schools that have become school-to-work transition programs, emphasizing employability skills, lifelong learning strategies and flexibility.

The school-to-work transition has become particularly problematic because the instructional methods and materials in the schools have become increasingly dissociated from the requirements of post-industrial organizations. Concern about school-to-work funding and priorities has spurred many counsellors and researchers to become, for the first time, interested in public policy. For example, in 1998 the American Psychological Association, prompted by the Society for Vocational Psychology, formed the School-to-Work Task Force to lobby public officials and influence legislation on work force preparation. This is but one example of the growing interest in public policy among career development specialists.

Career Development and Public Policy

Career development specialists have only infrequently attended to public policy about work and workers. To date, career development professional organizations and practitioners have been a loosely connected group of

people interested in learning about policies that we have not initiated, yet affect our work. At this time, we have decided to examine how we might become an interest network that publicizes needs, presses others to act and evaluates policy outcomes. To become policy actors who influence legislation, we must develop our own network, through self-organization and consensus. As an interest group, we can work to help shape the values public policy implements. As policy actors, we can attempt to persuade politicians to reorganize and reposition existing work force development and career guidance policies, not to create something new. In this effort, we must recruit social and political experts to augment our expertise in career theory and intervention.

I now turn to the main task of this paper, namely, discussing how career specialists as a community of technical experts can encourage policy makers to use our values, theory and research findings to assess the impact of current programs and to generate new policies. I include values, in addition to theory and research, because policy represents, through the commitment of funding, an expression and clarification of public values and intentions (Considine, 1994).

Values

Career development specialists can actively use policy to institutionalize values and preferred outcomes, starting by advancing our values in the very problem definitions that structure legislative action.

One example of how the values that structure career theory and research can influence public policy involves committee reports. Burstein and Bricher (1997) argued that public policy is affected by how committees define public problems. In the United States at least, how congressional committees define a problem shapes legislative action. New definitions can lead to new policy legislation. Consider, as one example, the issue of work–family conflict. In the United States between 1945 and 1990, there were 1,056 bills on paid work, family and gender referred to congressional committees. These committees served as gatekeepers, issuing just 69 reports. For most of this period, the committee reports conceptualized work, family and gender in different spheres and emphasized equal opportunity. In the 1990s, the bills favour work–family accommodation, moving from equal opportunity to concern about the problems both men and women have in balancing paid work and family. Because career specialists know problem definitions help shape public policy, we probably should conduct our own content analysis of problem definitions in committee reports regarding work force policy. Career specialists can become policy actors by making our problem definitions explicit and expressing them.

Definitions and concepts are important in explaining our goals and naming the outcomes we are trying to shape. Pivotal concepts both shape career

theory and represent our policy-relevant values. These critical constructs include a respect for individual differences, belief in the power of aspirations and dreams, emphasis on exploration and information, commitment to decision making and choice, facilitation of person–environment congruence, and nurturance of adaptability and flexibility. Career specialists can press our values by using them to advance new definitions of old problems. We know changing definitions and word choices can strongly influence public perceptions and policies. Consider the changes prompted by the shifts in language from "sexual preference" to "sexual orientation"; from automobile "accidents" to "crashes"; and from "willpower" to "disease" models of addiction. Similar transformations in public values and policies may be enabled by shifting definitions from "fitting people into occupations" to "fitting work into lives." Other definitional shifts could include moving:

- from *career* to *work life*;
- from *work–family conflict* to *work–family integration*;
- from *work values* to *life–role values*;
- from *maturity* to *adaptability*;
- from *work ethic* to *role salience* or *work importance*;
- from *occupational interests* to *activity interests*;
- from *abilities* to *skills*; and
- from *self-esteem* to *self-efficacy*.

Theory

In addition to values, career development specialists can offer policy makers career theory as a viable means of co-ordinating and systematizing work force policy.

Career theory offers a coherent framework for organizing and systematizing contemporary public policy about work and work force development. Current work force policies and programs have produced a vast, unco-ordinated network of services, provided by numerous types of professionals and funded by multiple sources. It is a simple idea, yet worth noting — co-ordination would improve both public policies and programs.

Herr has written persuasively about using life-cycle theory to reform comprehensively and interconnect policies that are now fragmented and piecemeal. He urged career development specialists to identify a "core set of career guidance activities tailored to populations by gender and age across the life-cycle" (1991: 281). Subsequently, Savickas (1996) designed such a model of core career services including education, guidance, placement, counselling and mentoring. Instead of differentiating career services by population and setting, he differentiated core services by the problems they address. Each distinct service addresses a different type of career concern, allowing individuals of different ages and in different settings to receive the same core service if it addresses their concern.

The core services could be provided most efficiently in one location, for example public libraries. Career services are now provided in schools, colleges, by U.S. employment services, the Veterans Administration, rehabilitation agencies, business and industry, libraries and philanthropic organizations such as the Jewish Vocational Service and YMCA (Herr, 1991). If the diverse services were co-ordinated and offered in a single location, then individuals could go to a career centre where an in-take interviewer would arrange for them to receive the core service best suited to their career concern. Twenty-five years ago, Super suggested that public libraries would be an ideal venue for such career centres. More recently, Watts (1996) suggested that government vouchers could be used to subsidize career services for individuals of every age. In short, career theory with its life-span perspective and a focus on core services could be used to help address the lack of coherence in work force policies and programs. Such a structure would, in due course, allow findings from empirical research to inform policy and practice more fully

Knowledge

The science of vocational psychology provides a dependable source of knowledge to inform public policy aimed at developing a satisfactory work force and satisfied workers. Vocational psychology has also produced effective career guidance techniques for assessing persons, providing occupational information and matching people to fitting positions.

These proven techniques can be made more efficient and self-directed by advances in computer technology. Career development specialists can offer their expert knowledge about job success and satisfaction to foster policy innovations and empirically validated practices. To make our research findings more useful in public policy arenas, we must first focus our knowledge on policy issues and then develop systems for collectively publicizing our findings, persuasively articulating our insights and distributing our most efficient and effective services. As an example of focussing our expert knowledge on policy issues, I have identified, from literature reviews and longitudinal studies, 14 facts that career specialists know for sure and could assert in debates about public policy regarding work force development and career guidance.

1. Childhood socialization influences adult work performance and job satisfaction.

We know attitudes toward work are formed early in life, so work force and vocational guidance policy should take a developmental perspective. Vocational psychologists such as Super, Crites, Gribbons and Lohnes have each concluded from their longitudinal studies that "planful"competence in early adolescence relates to more realistic educational and vocational choices, occupational success and career progress (cf. Savickas, 1993). Longitudinal studies in other fields, such as epidemiology, sociology,

psychiatry and developmental psychology, also have shown that early experiences help to shape an individual's work life. The sociologist Clausen (1991) used a 50-year longitudinal study to show that "planful" competence in early adolescence (i.e., a syndrome of self-confidence, dependability and effective use of intellectual resources) led to orderly careers in which individuals were stable and satisfied, and had fewer mid-life disruptions of career and marriages. Low competence related to recurrent life crises that involved career problems, marital conflict, divorce, depression and alienation. Clausen demonstrated that "planful" competence allowed adolescents to make better life choices, helped them elicit social support, contributed to reaching their goals and enabled them to deal with the ill-structured dilemmas of work life.

The epidemiologists Kalimo and Vuori (1991) traced the development of Finnish children for 25 years. They concluded that poor self-esteem and deficient social conditions in childhood constrained the development of personal resources and resulted in a greater probability of entering and remaining in inadequate jobs as well as more prevalent adult health problems.

Psychodynamic psychiatrists Valliant and Valliant (1981) reported that for underprivileged men the capacity to work in childhood predicted mental health and capacity for relationships at mid-life. It surpassed family problems and all other childhood variables in predicting success in adult life. By the age of 47, men who were competent and industrious at age 14 were twice as likely to have warm relationships with a variety of people, five times more likely to be well paid for their adult work, and 16 times less likely to have suffered significant unemployment. Intelligence was not an important mediating factor.

The developmental psychologist Bynner (1997) analyzed data from a major British longitudinal study involving 17,000 people born in the same week in April 1970 who were surveyed at ages 5,10, 16 and 21. Individuals with poor basic skills (reading, spelling, writing and counting) at age 10 showed different career paths at age 16. Rather than continue their education, they tended to get jobs (about 45 percent), enter government youth training programs or be unemployed. Problems with basic skills clearly led to problems in staying in school and acquiring more specific work-related skills.

2. Part-time work affects the socialization and development of adolescents. Along with family, school and peer group, work can be a key social context affecting the development of youth (Stone and Mortimer, 1998). Social scientists debate whether young people should be encouraged to work and whether some jobs are better than others to foster healthy adolescent development. Nevertheless, about 60 percent of high school juniors and 75 percent of high school seniors work for pay outside the home at least one

week during the academic year. On average, juniors work about 18 and seniors work about 24 hours during the weeks they work. Unfortunately, adolescents' work experience is usually unconnected to their occupational aspirations and career plans.

Based on their evaluation of the empirical evidence, Stone and Mortimer (1998) recommended that public policy explicitly link school to work so school personnel supervise work and make the workplace a context for youth development. This would allow teachers to connect work to school in meaningful ways, thereby helping students view work as a complement to school, not a separate domain. The links between school and work now are especially loose at lower levels, with school being almost irrelevant for unskilled and semi-skilled jobs. Stone and Mortimer (1998) also encouraged employers to provide moderate work hours over a long period of time, improve the quality of jobs and increase opportunities for skill development.

Even more radically, policy could reconstruct adolescence as a life stage. In current industrial societies, adolescence is socially constructed as a period of preparation for work: a life stage truncated by employment (Grubb, 1989). As society moves toward lifelong learning and job flexibility, adolescence could be reconstructed as a mix of work and schooling that extends into the 30s, giving greater flexibility around decisions related to career choice and certainty about it. Such a reconfiguration of adolescence as a life stage could reduce the floundering, drifting and stagnating among school leavers while increasing training and employment.

3. Knowing how the world of work is organized eases vocational decision making and job transition.

When individuals make an initial occupational choice or change jobs, they must choose from among thousands of jobs. Vocational psychology has shown that it helps tremendously to have a "compact view of the world of work at a more manageable level of abstraction" (Dawis, 1996: 239). This view can be socio-economic in terms of pay and fringe benefits or functional in terms of tasks and work conditions, yet vocational psychology has something better to offer. Based on 40 years of programmatic research, Holland (1997) has provided a compact view of the work world in terms of psychological attributes. He organized all jobs onto a hexagonal model of the world of work. Because jobs are mapped using personality traits, it is easy for individuals to find themselves in the world of work. By organizing occupational information and personality types using the same language, career development specialists ease decision making for clients. Knowing how environments are organized is a transferable skill that individuals can use to adapt to many diverse life situations.

4. Vocational exploration and information lead to better career decisions.
Vocational exploration and information gathering increase self-knowledge and awareness of suitable educational and occupational options (Blustein, 1992). One of the best ways to determine the wisdom of a specific career choice is to assess the amount of information an individual has collected about that choice. In addition to encouraging exploratory experiences, public policies should continue to support occupational information delivery systems, especially those that use computer technology and the Internet to distribute their products (Peterson et al., 1999).

5. Career interventions effectively ease occupational choice and enhance work adjustment.
Career interventions help individuals gain self-knowledge about where they can be satisfactory and satisfied workers (Baker and Taylor, 1998; Killeen, 1996; Whiston et al., 1998). The interventions can also smooth job transitions by helping job changers learn which jobs are easiest for them to move into and what specific skills they need to acquire. Evidence also supports the effectiveness of teaching individuals job-seeking skills. Today's economy requires the flexibility to move repeatedly into newly configured jobs. Career counsellors have evidence that their interventions help smooth school-to-work transitions and movement from one job to another. We do not yet have evidence, but we can infer from the available data that career interventions also benefit nations in reducing unemployment, enhancing gross national product and re-stimulating discouraged workers and displaced homemakers.

6. Interests shape occupational preferences and enhance learning during training.
The measurement of vocational interests is a singular accomplishment of vocational psychology. Over 75 years of systematic research has produced a clear understanding of interests as a motivational construct along with a sophisticated technology for measuring vocational interests of men and women across the life span and within diverse cultures. Most important, this research has documented how to best communicate interest inventory results to clients in a manner that fosters their occupational self-efficacy, vocational exploratory behaviour and career decision making (Savickas and Spokane, 1999). Self-knowledge about vocational interests enhances educational and vocational decision making. Knowledge about a candidate's interests also can be useful in selecting individuals for training programs.

7. Personality and ability determine job performance more than interests.
While interests are an important factor in shaping occupational preferences and predicting learning in job-training programs, they are less important in predicting job performance. True, it is better if interests match the content of the job; however, quality and level of job performance depend more on mental ability and certain personality traits. Based on a literature review of

personality and work, Tokar et al. (1998) concluded that personality traits, such as conscientiousness and extroversion, are important in job performance. Furthermore, individuals with an internal locus of control fare better in transitions and in initiating social support when they encounter problems. Individuals who demonstrate autonomy, self-esteem and a future orientation not only plan their careers more successfully, they also become more satisfactory and satisfied workers.

8. Congruence between the worker and the job improves performance.
The goal of career interventions is to help individuals move to increasing congruence in their interactions with the environment, as defined by job satisfaction, commitment and productivity, and contrasted with turnover, absence, tardiness and interpersonal conflicts. Career development specialists know from an extensive literature that person–environment fit should be an important value, not only in career interventions, but also in public policy. Based on a literature review, Edwards (1991: 328) concluded that "across a variety of measures, samples, job content areas, and operationalizations, Person-Job fit has demonstrated the expected relationships with outcomes."

Congruence also is important from an employer's perspective. Employers who can select more congruent employees from a better applicant pool have an advantage over their competitors. In short, person–job congruence benefits the worker, the company and the nation.

9. The transition from school to work can be smoothed.
Unemployment rates for youth just out of high school are usually three to four times higher than the rates for adult workers. The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth showed that youth between the ages of 18 and 27, who graduated from high school yet did not enter post-secondary training, held about six different jobs and had four or five spells of unemployment (Veum and Weiss, 1993). Public policy could benefit youth and society by forging tighter links between schooling, adolescent employment and adult careers. When linkages are made (particularly apprenticeships, magnet schools, internships, co-operative work–education and shadowing experiences), they appear to be quite successful in fostering school-to-work transitions. The programs are most successful when work and training are complementary, rather than making training and schooling preparatory for work. Because work habits and attitudes strongly influence early adult earnings, training programs should emphasize these work behaviours as much as they emphasize job skills.

10. Organizational socialization of new employees promotes satisfaction and performance.
Companies can use realistic job previews and systematic socialization to provide information that reduces uncertainty and anxiety in new employees. Providing new employees with a cognitive map of their

organization and work context has been shown to increase performance, satisfaction and retention (Saks and Ashforth, 1997). With increasingly diverse work forces, it is even more important to impart an overarching set of norms, attitudes and beliefs.

11. Work can be structured to foster emotional well-being.
Good jobs foster mental health whereas poor jobs cause distress (Loscocco and Roschelle, 1991). Good jobs usually provide substantive complexity, challenge, feedback, variety and autonomy. Jobs are even better in this regard if they include significant tasks with which workers can identity. In contrast, poor jobs involve excessive workload or responsibility, role ambiguity, forced overtime, conflicting roles, tasks more complex than ability and the lack of control over job demands. The context in which work is performed also influences mental health. Poor working conditions caused by noise and noxious stimuli cause distress. As jobs are being redesigned to emphasize process over content, public policy has an opportunity to reinforce the importance of including intrinsic rewards in new jobs. If particular jobs cannot be redesigned to promote health, then policy can encourage employers to provide workers with training in coping with occupational stress.

12. Workers can learn to cope more effectively with occupational stress.
Stressors include the dimensions of poor jobs noted previously: role overload, insufficient resources to do the tasks, excessive responsibility and noxious physical environment. These elements cause stress, but how much of the occupational stress becomes personal strain depends on a worker's coping resources. Workers experience less strain if they cope with stress by recreation, self-care, social support and rational problem solving. These four types of coping behaviours have direct effects on strain, but they do not have a direct link to job satisfaction (Fogarty et al., in press). Public policy can encourage employers and career specialists to increase their efforts at teaching these common sense, and empirically validated, coping techniques.

13. Work–family connections can be made less conflictual and more integrative.
Conflicts between work responsibilities and family obligations can cause significant personal strain and lower productivity. Problems can be bi-directional, with work problems contaminating family life and family responsibilities (e.g., child care, care of elders) distracting work concentration. Research on work–family conflict has accelerated during the last 25 years prompted by the increasing number of dual-earner partners or single parents. Legislative and employer initiatives that enact "family-friendly" work policies, such as flexibility in work scheduling, can alleviate some of this conflict (Loscocco and Roschelle, 1991). After reviewing 59 empirical studies on work–family conflict, Greenhaus and Parasuraman (in press) suggested work–family integration as a possible

new paradigm, one that focusses on opportunities wherein multiple roles can expand rather than deplete resources. Positive spillover (enhancement) can outweigh negative depletion (conflict). Two examples of positive spillover are "status enhancement" and "personality enrichment." Status enhancement means using money, connections and other work resources to promote family well-being. Personality enrichment means transferring skills and attitudes from one domain to the role being enacted. Public policies that reduce conflict and increase integration will be good for families, as well as organizations and individual workers.

14. Individual differences among aging workers can be used to retain and retrain productive workers.

An often overlooked problem is that the work forces in Western societies are aging rapidly. Moreover, restructuring and downsizing of industries have had disproportionate negative effects on older workers. We know from empirical research that as workers age, individual differences increase, with some workers maintaining and even improving their skills while others lose their initiative and let their skills deteriorate (Hansson et al., 1997). We need to design policies to retain productive older workers and encourage the use of enabling technologies. Now, more than ever, society must recognize and affirm the contributions of older workers while reducing ageist stereotypes and pressures to retire. Training opportunities must be provided with regard to functional ability and interest, not chronological age.

Conclusions

Career professionals can offer their values, theory and empirical knowledge as a descriptive base from which to devise principles and construct social policy regarding work force development and career guidance. We envision public policies that fund a comprehensive set of core career services provided in centralized locations such as libraries. These policies should reflect normative age-graded, general and traumatic influences on career concerns across the entire life span with equal attention to socializing children, preparing adolescents, encouraging adults and retaining aging workers. The career services should help individuals develop a strategic expertise in managing their own careers so, on the one hand, they invest their talents wisely, make fitting choices, adapt quickly to changing circumstances and, on the other hand, contribute to their organizations and co-operate with their communities.

In addition to advocating for sound work force development and career guidance policies, career development specialists must:

- innovate their theories;
- use more technology in service provision;
- link counselling to training and adjustment as well as career choice;
- effectively co-ordinate core services;

- become accountable for outcomes;
- attend to aging workers;
- increase our credibility in industry settings;
- market career services; and
- attract sponsors (Herr, 1991; Hoyt and Lester, 1995; Pryor, 1991; Watts, 1996).

In short, it is time for career development specialists to become more proactive in revitalizing our values, theory and research, and become policy actors who help to develop and guide our national work forces.

References

Baker, S.B. and J.G. Taylor. (1998). "Effects of career education interventions: A meta-analysis." *Career Development Quarterly*. 46: 376-385.

Blustein, D.L. (1992). "Applying current theory and research in career exploration to practice." *Career Development Quarterly*. 41: 174-184.

Burstein, P. and M. Bricher. (1997). "Problem definition and public policy: Congressional committees confront work, family, and gender, 1945-1990." *Social Forces*. 75, pp. 135-169.

Bynner, J.M. (1997). "Basic skills in adolescents' occupational preparation." *Career Development Quarterly*. 45: 305-321.

Carlsen, M.B. (1988). *Meaning-making: Therapeutic processes in adult development*. New York: Norton.

Cascio, W.F. (1995). "Whither industrial and organizational psychology in a changing world of work?" *American Psychologist*. 50: 928-939.

Clausen, J.S. (1991). "Adolescent competence and the shaping of the life course." *American Journal of Sociology*. 96: 805-842.

Considine, M. (1994). *Public policy: A critical approach*. Melbourne, Australia: MacMillan.

Dawis, R.V. (1996). "Vocational psychology, vocational adjustment, and the workforce: Some familiar and unanticipated consequences." *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*. 2, pp. 229-248.

Edwards, J.R. (1991). "Person-job fit: A conceptual integration, literature review, and methodological critique." In *International Review of Industrial and Organizational Psychology 1991, Volume 6*. Edited by C. L. Cooper and I. T. Robertson. London: John Wiley & Sons.

Fogarty, G.J., M.A. Machin, M.J. Albion, L.F. Sutherland, G.I. Lalor and S. Revitt. (in press). "Predicting occupational strain and job satisfaction: The role of stress, coping, personality, and affectivity variables." *Journal of Vocational Behavior*. 54.

Greenhaus, J.H. and S. Parasuraman. (in press). "Research on work, family, and gender: Current status and future directions." In *Handbook of gender in organizations*. Edited by G.N. Powell. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Grubb, W.N. (1989). "Preparing youth for work: The dilemmas of education and training programs." In *Adolescence and work: Influences of social structure, labor markets, and culture*. Edited by D. Stern and D. Eichorn. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, pp. 13-48.

Hansson, R.O., P.D. DeKoekkoek, W.M. Neece and D.W. Patterson. (1997). "Successful aging at work: Annual review, 1992-1996: The older worker and transitions to retirement." *Journal of Vocational Behavior*. 51: 202-233.

Herr, E.L. (1991). "Multiple agendas in a changing society: Policy challenges confronting career guidance in the USA." *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*. 19: 267-282.

Holland, J.L. (1997). *Making vocational choices: A theory of vocational personalities and work environments*. 3rd edition. Odessa, FL: Psychological Assessment Resources.

Hoyt, K.B. and J.N. Lester. (1995). *Learning to work: the NCDA Gallup survey*. Alexandria, VA: National Career Development Association.

Kalimo, R. and J. Vuori. (1991). "Work factors and health: The predictive role of pre-employment experiences." *Journal of Occupational Psychology*. 64: 97-115.

Killeen, J. (1996). "The learning and economic outcomes of guidance." In *Rethinking careers education and guidance*. Edited by A. Watts, B. Law, J. Killeen, J. Kidd and R. Hawthorn. London: Routledge, pp. 72-91.

Loscocco, K.A. and A.R. Roschelle. (1991). "Influences on the quality of work and non-work life: Two decades in review." *Journal of Vocational Behavior*. 39: 182-225.

Miller-Tiedeman, A. and D. Tiedeman. (1985). "Educating to advance the human career during the 1980's and beyond." *Vocational Guidance Quarterly*. 34: 15-30.

Parsons, F. (1909). *Choosing a vocation*. New York: Agathon.

Peterson, N.G., M.D. Mumford, W.C. Borman, P.R. Jeanneret and E.A. Fleishman. (1999). *An occupational information system for the 21st century: The development of O*NET*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Pffefer, J. (1994). *Competitive advantage through people*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Oliver, L.W. and A.R. Spokane. (1988). "Career-intervention outcome: What contributes to client gain?" *Journal of Counseling Psychology*. 35: 447-462.

Pryor, R.G L. (1991). "When luck runs out: Policy challenges confronting careers guidance in Australia." *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*. 19: 283-297.

Richardson, M.S. (1993). "Work in people's lives: A location for counseling psychologists." *Journal of Counseling Psychology*. 40: 425-433.

Saks, A.M. and B.E. Ashforth. (1997). "Organizational socialization: Making sense of the past and present as a prologue for the future." *Journal of Vocational Behavior*. 51: 234-279.

Savickas, M.L. (1993). "The predictive validity of career development measures." *Journal of Career Assessment*. 1: 93-104.

———. (1996). "A framework for linking career theory and practice." In *Handbook of career counseling theory and practice*. Edited by M.L. Savickas and W.B. Walsh. Palo Alto: Davies-Black.

———. (in press). "Renovating the psychology of careers for the 21st century." In *The future of career*. Edited by A. Collin and R. Young. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Savickas, M.L. and A.R. Spokane (Eds.). (1999). *Vocational interests: Meaning, measurement, and counseling use*. Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black Press.

Smith, F. L. and J.E. Hunter. (in press). "The validity and utility of selection methods in personnel psychology: Practical and theoretical implications of 85 years of research findings." *Psychological Bulletin*.

Stone, J.R., III and J.T. Mortimer. (1998). "The effect of adolescent employment on vocational development: Public and educational policy implications." *Journal of Vocational Behavior*. 53: 184-214.

Super, D.E. (1957). *The psychology of careers*. New York: Harper.

Tokar, D.M., A.R. Fischer and L.M. Subich. (1998). "Personality and vocational behavior: A selective review of the literature, 1993-1997." *Journal of Vocational Behavior*. 53: 115-153.

Valliant, G.E. and C.O. Valliant. (1981). "Natural history of male psychological health, X: Work as a predictor of positive mental health." *American Journal of Psychiatry*. 138: 1433-1440.

Veum, J.R. and A.B. Weiss. (1993). "Education and the work histories of young adults." *Monthly Labor Review*. April, 11-20.

Watts, A.G. (1996). "Careers guidance and public policy." In *Rethinking careers education and guidance*. Edited by A. Watts, B. Law, J. Killeen, J. Kidd and R. Hawthorn. London: Routledge, pp. 380-391.

Whiston, S.C., T.L. Sexton and D.L. Lasoff. (1998). "Career-intervention outcome: A replication and extension of Oliver and Spokane (1988)." *Journal of Counseling Psychology*. 45: 150-165.

Young, R.A. and L. Valach. (1996). "Interpretation and action in career counseling." In *Handbook of career counseling theory and practice*. Edited by M.L. Savickas and W.B. Walsh. Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black, pp. 361-375.